

## **FAQs: The ABCs of Absentee Voting**

**Q: If the original witness is not available, can elector ask for a new ballot then?**

A: If they make such a request before the applicable absentee request deadline, yes.

**Q: Is it the Election Inspector's responsibility to try to contact a voter of an incomplete certification?**

A: No, that should be done before Election Day by the clerk's office, if possible.

**Q: So, would it be good practice for the clerk to mark all absentees in their poll books prior to giving it to the election inspectors?**

A: Yes!

**Q: I got a RED "absentee" stamp and stamp the Poll Books before elections; fast and easy for poll workers to see.**

A: Sounds great!

**Q: A tip for the Absentee, instead of writing it in after they come in, we use a small rubber stamp.**

A: Thanks for the tip!

**Q: May a Deputy Clerk for elections be considered a Special Voting Deputy and be allowed to go to the Nursing Homes to assist in voting?**

A: If they are eligible to serve as an SVD, yes.

**Q: That's why it seems like a silly process, because after the general there are generally no elections, thanks.**

A: Note that April is also a "general" election or any special election.

**Q: If you notify the voters they are removed from the absentee list after the general, and they tell you they want to be on the list, there are no more elections to send out for the year, so how could you put them back on? Do they just start the process over and request for the new year, because it is a yearly event?**

A: If there are no more elections, they will have to submit a new request for the next calendar year.

**Q: Issued an absentee ballot, then sent a replacement ballot, still not vote it, came to polling place to vote in person, is that their 3rd ballot?**

A: Yes, but I believe the 3 ballot rule was intended to apply to the polling place, so if you ran into a situation where a voter was going to be denied another ballot due to absentee replacement ballots, I'd suggest calling us first to confirm.

**Q: How will I know if someone went to MyVote and requested an absentee ballot? Will I get an e-mail?**

A: Yes, please take a look at the MyVote Wisconsin webinar on November 13, 2013 for examples of notifications: <http://gab.wi.gov/clerks/education-training/webinars>.

**Q: Did you state that the Jan. 29th and March 5th webinars have been rescheduled?**

A: The topics have been switched; the dates remain in place.

**Q: Back to overseas voters, do temporary overseas voters need to be entered in SVRS?**

A: No, they do not need to have their absentees tracked.

**Q: If only the signature of the voter is missing on the certificate and he/she comes in with their witness, why can't he/she just sign the original certificate?**

A: Because the witness is certifying that they saw the elector sign the envelope, which they clearly did not.

**Q: If you do not process an incorrect certificate until after 8:00 and the voter came in to vote in person, how would you know they have a voted absentee ballot waiting for 8:00?**

A: Absentee voters should be noted as such on the poll book or the inspectors should be required to check the absentee ballot log before issuing a ballot to each elector.

**Q: Helpful calendar. Thank you!**

A: Thanks!

**Q: Did the legislature enact restrictions on the hours for in-person voting above and beyond the information in the handout? I remember reading about discussion of such restrictions and don't know whether the restrictions were adopted as law?**

A: No, the handout is current.

**Q: When time permits, could a voter void the incomplete certificate envelope because the original witness is not available, and the voter could proceed to vote anew in the clerk's office?**

A: Yes, if time permits and the applicable deadline has not passed.

**Q: For mailing a ballot to a military voter, are post offices required to send the ballot 'free of charge' no postage required?**

A: Yes. There is a different carrier envelope you should use for those (GAB-122m).

**Q: Please review the hours a clerk may hold absentee voting. Weekend hours, hours after 5 p.m.?**

A: Currently, there are no restrictions on the number of hours the clerk's office may be open for in-person absentee between the 3rd Monday before the election and the Friday before the

election. However, there is a bill in the Legislature to change that. Stay tuned!

**Q: January calendar shows a 'close of registration' on the calendar. Does that refer to voter registration by mail or all voter registration?**

A: Voter Registration by mail or Special Registration Deputy. After the close of registration, voter registration must be done in-person in the clerk's office or at the polls on Election Day.

**Q: Has the GAB prepared a written explanation of the importance of returning replacement envelopes for incomplete envelopes for absentee voters? It would be nice for all clerks to use the same language with this confusing matter. Thanks.**

A: No we have not, thanks for the feedback though.

**Q: January calendar shows a 'close of registration' on the calendar. Does that refer to voter registration by mail or all voter registration?**

A: Sorry, meant by mail or SRD. Registration after that date can only take place in the clerk's office or at the polls.

**Q: I have a resident who is indefinitely confined in a care facility in another municipality. When I send the absentee ballot to the clerk of that municipality, do I address the absentee envelope with the Clerk's address, or do I address it with the voter's info as usual and then send it in another plain envelope addressed to the clerk? Thank you.**

A: Second option.

**Q: If a hospitalized elector registers via agent, do they have to provide proof of residency?**

A: Yes.

**Q: What if a voter voted absentee in the Clerk's Office and the certificate envelope was not witnessed by the Clerk or Deputy Clerk. Do the poll workers count it?**

A: Yes, but the clerk/deputy should sign.

**Q: Do I need a sealed bag when the polling place ins in clerk's office and they are stored in a locked filing cabinet?**

A: Unless the secured cabinet is immediately in the voting area, yes, you should still use a sealed bag to ensure ballot integrity in transit.

**Q: Yes it's in the immediate voting area.**

A: Great!

**Q: Must we fill out both the absentee ballot log and the supplemental absentee ballot log?**

A: They are the same, just different versions on our website.

**Q: What's a WET signature?**

A: An inked signature.

**Q: Reminder that reliers need to mark their poll books with A for their absentee ballots if their provider doesn't use the absentee node.**

A: Thanks!

**Q: General elections are either the gubernatorial or presidential - correct?**

A: Anything that is not a primary, so it includes April and special elections.

**Q: Why is it necessary to record an absentee voter name & info on the abs ballot lot if their abs ballot has been accurately voted & log with a voter number on the poll list?**

A: The absentee ballot log is tracking your absentee ballots before you have a poll list.

**Q: Why does the GAB-121 have a Clerk's Office option if/when Clerk Office voters complete the GAB-122 as their request?**

A: Option for voters to check. They could decide to mail or fax it in, but voter wants to go to clerk's office.

**Q: But did I understand that an elector could request that an incomplete envelope be spoiled and start over?**

A: If within the applicable timeframe, yes.

**Q: To be clear, if they do not return a ballot for Feb. 18, we still send them a ballot for April 1?**

A: Administratively, there is usually not enough time to remove them.

**Q: To be clear, if they do not return a ballot for Feb. 18, we still send them a ballot for April 1?**

A: So yes.

**Q: Do you record of certification for attendance today?**

A: For municipal clerks, yes, send us the municipal clerk reporting form, for election inspectors, the clerk handles that recording.

**Q: Does a spouse or dependent have to have resided in your municipality?**

A: No.

**Q: So the deadline for returning a ballot with an incomplete certificate is 8 p.m. on Election Day, BUT someone who spoils their ballot has until the Friday after the Election to return the ballot by mail?**

A: Still must be postmarked by Election Day, but yes.

**Q: Pg. 34 of our materials today says that a FWAB cannot be accepted unless there is an absentee application on file.**

A: Need to receive the separate page that is the application.

**Q: Rather than return to the clerk's office or polls to correct absentee ballot w/witness, would it be easier to vote another ballot?**

A: It often is, but the voter has the option to correct rather than vote a new ballot. Also, sometimes you will be past the deadline for issuing new ballots and the only option will be correcting the defective envelope.

**Q: If an absentee ballot was sent to a voter and was returned by the post office for insufficient address, the voter was contacted and the ballot was sent to the voter again and again returned by the post office, how is this documented/processed on Election Day?**

A: Document on absentee ballot log with bad address as the reason.

**Q: Can address labels be used on the envelopes?**

A: Yes.

**Q: Why can the voter still vote in person at the polls if they have spoiled their ballot and they "chose" not to return the replacement? But a voter who has forgotten to sign cannot? It would encourage people spoiling ballots, correct?**

A: Legislative intent, we won't speculate.

**Q: What is the difference between a GAB-123 and GAB-124?**

A: The GAB-123 is the provisional certificate envelope and the GAB-124 is the absentee ballot log.

**Q: Do we log absentees on the EB-123 or GAB-124?**

A: I can see why this is confusing. I don't know why the footer of the supplemental has EB-123, but will correct - thanks!

**Q: Does a voter have to complete another absentee application if they are removed from the absentee list because they did not return a ballot when they requested one for the calendar year?**

A: If they are responding directly to your notification, it's fine to continue to send them. If they didn't respond, and were removed, then yes.

**Q: Did you say that the last day for a PERMANENT absentee voter to make a request for a ballot is Friday at 5:00 p.m., versus the deadline of Thursday at 5:00 p.m. for regular absentee voters?**

A: Indefinitely confined voters have until 5 p.m. the Friday before the election. See absentee ballot request deadlines, p. 37.

**Q: Is a general election the April and November Elections, for the 30-day notice to permanent absentee voters that didn't return a ballot, or just the November Election?**

A: April, November and special elections.

**Q: If you receive an incomplete absentee ballot envelope after Election Day, but before your MBOC, you can't call the party to come in and correct the envelope - is this correct?**

**A: Correct.**

**Q: What is the difference in the Absentee application in the packet and the current one on the website dated 2013-06?**

**A: Nothing, but I should have used the one on the website. Thanks.**

**Q: Page 12 of the Absentee Voting in Nursing Homes... document states:**

**"An indefinitely confined elector whose name appears on the absentee ballot log may not wish to vote an absentee ballot, but may want to maintain his or her status as an indefinitely confined voter. In that case, the SVDs should ask the elector to enclose a blank ballot in the certificate envelope and sign the certificate."**

**Several of our nursing homes have well over 100 residents and in some elections, many do not wish to vote. Isn't it wasteful to use our supply of ballots and envelopes? We think it's bad enough the 2 absentee labels per person are wasted. We send a list of the voters with the SVD's, couldn't the residents just sign the list indicating they wish to stay on as indefinitely confined or a blank envelope?**

**A: We are looking into alternatives, but for now that it is the proper procedure.**

**Q: During "closed" registration, if a permanent overseas voter is NOT registered in your municipality, but in another municipality, can they request a ballot from the old municipality?**

**A: If they are an overseas voter they are not coming back and must vote in the last municipality at which they reside.**